

REMARKS

Interview summary

Applicant's representative, Michael Dryja, conducted an interview with the Examiner. The focus of the interview was to identify subject matter within the patent application that would render the claimed invention allowable. No agreement was reached as to what subject matter should be included in the claims to render the patent application definitively allowable. However, the Examiner indicated that the mask register and the masking operations performed by the mask register, as disclosed in FIG. 1A and described in the patent application, are likely not found within the cited prior art and patentable over the current rejections, but that a new prior art search would probably be required to ensure that other prior art does not disclose these operations.

Claim rejections under 35 USC 103 as to claims 1-5, 8-9, 11-12, and 14-18

Claims 1-5, 8-9, 11-12, and 14-18 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson (5,796,972) in view of Jim Handy, The Cache Memory Book, 2nd edition, which is hereinafter referred to as Handy. Claims 1, 8, 11, 14, 16, and 18 are independent claims, from which the other claims rejected on this basis ultimately depend. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection as to the independent claims as have been amended, such that all the pending claims rejected on this basis are patentable.

Claim 1 is discussed as representative of all the independent claims insofar as patentability over Johnson in view of Handy is concerned. Claim 1 has been amended so that selecting at least some of the identifying information of an operation to output to a comparator in particular is performed "by employing a masking register that filters the at least some of the identifying information of the operation." More specifically, "the masking register [is] logically AND'ed with all the identifying information of the operation." The masking register has "binary ones corresponding to the at least some of the identifying information to output to the comparator and

binary zeros corresponding to other of the identifying information not output to the comparator.” Support for this amendment to the claims is found in the patent application as originally filed at least in FIG. 1A and page 9, lines 3-14, of the patent application as filed.

Applicant submits that the claimed invention as has been amended is patentable over Johnson in view of Handy. In particular, the combination of Johnson and Handy does not disclose the employment of a masking register to filter which of the identifying information of an operation is input to a comparator. Johnson in view of Handy further does not disclose the logical AND’ing of such a masking register with all the identifying information of the operation, where the register has binary ones corresponding to the identifying information to output to the comparator and binary zeros corresponding to other of the identifying information not output to the comparator. In this way, the claimed invention is patentable over the cited prior art.

Pursuant to the Examiner interview conducted by Applicant’s representative, Applicant understands that the Examiner may wish to perform another prior art search before indicating that the claimed subject matter is allowable. **However, to advance this patent application to allowance, Applicant very much requests that the Examiner indicate in a forthcoming Advisory Action whether the claims as now presented are at the very least patentable over Johnson in view of Handy alone.** That is, it will greatly assist Applicant in going forward if the Examiner can at least say whether the claimed invention is now patentable over Johnson in view of Handy, with the understanding that a further prior art search may have to be conducted to determine if other prior art contains the limitations not found in Johnson in view of Handy.

Claim rejections under 35 USC 103(a) as to claim 19

Claim 19 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson in view of Handy, and further in view of IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin, vol. 37, no. 03, which is hereinafter referred to as IBM. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Insofar as Handy is not properly combined with Johnson under 35 USC 103(a), as has been recited in depth above,

claim 19 is patentable under 35 USC 103(a) over Johnson in view of Handy, and further in view of IBM.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a diligent effort to place the pending claims in condition for allowance, and request that they so be allowed. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Applicants' Attorney so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible. For these reasons, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Date

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